GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5248
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2008
EXTINCTION OF SEA TURTTES
Manoj Dr. K.S.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sea-turtles in the country are facing extinction;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to conserve these turtles?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY)

(a) & (b) As per the reports available, five species of marine turtles, viz.the Olive Ridley turtle (Lepidochelys ofivacea), Green Sea turtle (Chelonia my das), Leatherback turtle (Dermochelys coriacea), Hawksbill turtle (Er&tmochelys imbricata) and Loggerhead Turtle (Caretta caretta) are found in Indian territorial waters and four species (except the Loggerhead turtle) nest on Indian coasts.Though all these five species are endangered, there are no specific reports of any of these species facing extinction in our country.However,a number of activities like indiscriminate trawling by mechanized boats, high intensity disturbances due to unplanned coastal development, predation of eggs by jackals, dogs and other carnivores and human interference etc. pose a danger to long term conservation of these species.

(c) The Steps taken by the Government to conserve the species are as follows:

i) Sea turtles like Green Sea turtles, Olive Ridley turtles,Hawksbill turtle; Leathery turtle,Logger head turtle,etc.are included in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby affording highest degree of protection.

ii) The main nesting grounds of Sea Turtles have been declared as Protected Areas under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

iii) Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Scheme, viz, `Development of National Parks & Sanctuaries1 for providing better protection and conservation to wildlife including sea turtles.

iv) Fishermen have been advised to use Turtle Excluding Devise (TED) during trawling and to avoid trawling during nesting seasons. The State of Orissa has also made it mandatory for all trawling boats to use TED.

v) The State Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patroliing in and around the Protected Areas. Patrolling in the coastal areas is done by the State Government with the cooperation of the Indian Coast Guards.

vi) The Wildlife (Protection) Act has been amended and made more stringent. The punishments in cases of offences have been enhanced.The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence.
vii) The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

vll) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

ix) Awareness campaigns are organized in coastal areas for general public for conservation of sea turtles.